

How can diabetes affect my nervous system?

Over time, too much fat and **glucose**, also called sugar, in your blood from diabetes can damage your nerves. High blood glucose also can damage the small blood vessels that nourish your nerves with oxygen and nutrients. Without enough oxygen and nutrients, nerves cannot function well. Damaged nerves may stop sending signals, or they may send signals too slowly or at the wrong times.

Nerve damage from diabetes is called **diabetic neuropathy**.

If you have diabetes, you can develop nerve damage at any time; however, you are more likely to have it the older you are and the longer you have diabetes. Nerve damage is also more likely if you

- have high **cholesterol** and blood fat
- have high blood pressure
- are overweight
- have kidney disease
- smoke
- drink too many alcoholic beverages